

in a *Quercus baloot*. On closer examination, a nest-hole was located in one of the smaller branches. Calls from within indicated the presence of young.

This is the first record of this species for the Palas Valley and represents a slight north-westerly range extension in Pakistan.

This small woodpecker is often overlooked in mixed species flocks (Ali and Ripley, 1983) and may in fact be commoner than it appears to be throughout its range in Pakistan. It would seem likely that suitable areas in the foothills of the western Himalayas hold undetected breeding populations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank their colleagues Naeem Ashraf and Abdul Ghafoor, of the Himalayan Jungle Project, for their help whilst working in Palas Valley.

June 3, 1996

P.J. BENSTEAD
N.J. BEAN
D.A. SHOWLER
P.A. WHITTINGTON
*Beaver House,
Norwich Road,
Reepham, Norwich NR10 4JN*

REFERENCES

- ALI, S. AND S.D. RIPLEY (1983): Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- ROBERTS, T. J. (1991): Birds of Pakistan. Volume 1: Non-passerines. Oxford University Press, Karachi.

15. MIMICRY BY GREY DRONGO *DICRURUS LEUCOPHAEUS*

In my orchard at Vashishta, 3.5 km up the valley above the now overcrowded hill station of Manali in Himachal Pradesh, I have the pleasure of the company of several mid-altitude Himalayan birds. Among these are a couple of pairs of rather aggressive, highly visible and vocal grey drongos *Dicrurus leucophaeus*. On the morning of 9th May, 1996 while walking to the house I heard lora-like piping whistles. To my astonishment and delight, I traced the sounds to a drongo perched atop a pear tree. The bird continued the whistles which almost sounded like tentative attempts at mimicry — not sure of itself the bird burst into

its metallic, challenging calls to pause and then try out the whistles, some longer and more high pitched than others, sounding like the familiar loras warming up to full vocalisation in late March and April. It is at this time that the grey drongos are coming into prenuptial vigour just prior to leaving the plains. Both loras and drongos share the common flower-laden coral, flame of the forest and other trees during that period.

July 10, 1996

LAVKUMAR KHACHER
*646, Vastunirman,
Gandhinagar-382 002.*

16. RECORD OF THE SIGHTINGS AND BREEDING OF PIED MYNAH
STURNUS CONTRA AT LAHORE

The HANDBOOK (Ali and Ripley, 1987) reported the pied mynah (*Sturnus contra*) as missing west of a line from about 76°E (Ludhiana and Hissar) thus excluding Pakistan from its

distributional range. However, Dr. Rees Davies reported it to T.J. Roberts as far back as 1965. This and subsequent records by Z.B. Mirza in 1982 and Dr. Mubashir Hasan in 1985, all from

Lahore and its surrounding area made Roberts include it in his book *THE BIRDS OF PAKISTAN* (1992) as a rare and local visitor to this country. No record of its breeding in Pakistan has ever been given.

However, detailed observation over a period of six years has revealed it to be an uncommon but regular breeding visitor to the environs of Lahore. I have sighted the bird over thirty times and found it to have been breeding in some five cases. The nests are built either in electric poles or in trees. Young were observed to have been raised in three cases. In a sighting in 1993, the nest was built on an electric pole at a height of about 6 m. It was a rag-tag collection

of grasses, pieces of cloth and other material. The two young left the nest by 21st August, 1993. They could fly well and accompanied their parents, both of whom fed them.

The pied mynah can easily be seen around the well-wooded suburbs of Lahore. I have found the bird in all months of the year except the colder ones and very late in January, which probably indicates that it is an early breeding visitor to Lahore, staying on till the end of the rains.

July 10, 1996

SYED ALI MURTAZA
1-H, Gulberg III, Lahore.

REFERENCES

ALI SÁLIM & S. DILLON RIPLEY (1987): *Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan*. Vol. 5, pp 173. Oxford University Press, Bombay.

ROBERTS T.J. (1992): *The Birds of Pakistan* Vol. 2 pp 464.

17. NEW RECORD FOR BLACKTHROATED JAY *GARRULUS LANCEOLATUS* (VIGORS) IN KASHMIR

The blackthroated jay *Garrulus lanceolatus* (Vigors) is reported from Pakistan, from Chitral through the outer ranges and valleys of the western Himalayas through Kashmir to Nepal (HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Ali and Ripley, 1987). It is locally common in Pakistan in the Takht-i-Suleiman range, Shingar range, and Torghar range, as well as in Dir and Swat through Murree and Hazara dist. into Kashmir (THE BIRDS OF PAKISTAN, Vol. 2, T.J. Roberts, 1992). This jay has not been recorded in the Gilgit region of Kashmir North.

We observed individuals and small flocks of blackthroated jays in the Tangir and Khanbari Valleys from 8th August to 15th August, 1995. These side valleys are in Chilas dist. 35° 24' N lat. and 74° 11' E long.) on the northwest side of

the Indus River. The birds were sighted at ca. 2000 m elevation, flying and perching among streamside walnut and fruit trees. Indigenous tree species at this elevation included *Quercus baloot* and *Pinus gerardiana*.

These valleys are somewhat contiguous with the Swat Range, so the discovery of this species in the Chilas region should not come as a great surprise. However, possibly due to a lack of research in this area, the species was not previously recorded in this part of Kashmir.

June 4, 1996

PETER ZAHLER
NAEEM I. DAR
KARIM AKHTAR
P.O. Box 896
Lee. MA 01238, USA

18. YELLOWBROWED BULBUL *HYPSIPETES INDICUS* (JERDON) IN THE KOLLI HILLS (TAMIL NADU), EASTERN GHATS

The yellowbrowed bulbul *Hypsipetes indicus* (Jerdon) (Ali and Ripley, 1983) is known

to occur only in the evergreen biotope of the Western Ghats south of Belgaum and Goa and